

# Department of Communication Tenure & Promotion Criteria

This document presents the Department of Communication's Criteria for tenure and promotion (T&P), which are consistent with the College of Arts & Sciences T&P Procedures, the University of South Florida T&P Guidelines, and with the Board of Trustees regulations defined by USF10.105 and USF10.106, USF System policy 10.116, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Candidates should familiarize themselves with all of these documents. The Department of Communication is not currently a multi-campus unit. If departmental faculty are hired at branch campuses, we will modify our T&P documents to ensure that those faculty are included in matters of Tenure & Promotion and to ensure they have a voice in promotion issues. We recognize the principles of equity of assignment, resources and opportunities of faculty across a multi-campus university.

## **I. Department Mission Statement**

The Department of Communication at USF is dedicated to high quality research and teaching that advances the understanding and practice of communication in its professional, cultural and intellectual contexts, promotes knowledge about the role and impact of communication in individual lives, social structures and processes, and develops skills enabling people to perform effectively as citizens in a democracy.

## **II. Department Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Review and Recommendation**

### **A. Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor**

Tenured members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) prepare a narrative outlining the contents of the candidate's application for tenure and the candidate's progress since the mid-tenure review. This narrative is presented to the voting-eligible faculty members at the meeting when the vote occurs. This narrative does not contain evaluations or rankings, and the FEC does not conduct a vote or record a recommendation in their preparation of the narrative.

Tenured faculty members who meet University and College eligibility requirements, and whose lines are 50% or more in the department are eligible to vote on tenure and promotion recommendations. Emeritus faculty members are not eligible. Eligible faculty meet to discuss the candidate's application and vote by secret ballot. The department Chair does not vote on the faculty recommendation.

The FEC revises the narrative to reflect the discussion at the meeting and records the faculty recommendations. When the document is completed and signed by the FEC Chair, it is submitted to the department Chair for inclusion in the candidate's application. The department Chair submits her or his own separate recommendation

according to University and College procedures.

- B. Promotion to the rank of (full) Professor  
 Conduct of the department deliberation and recommendations will be according to University and College procedures. Only eligible Professors will participate. There is no separate FEC committee review, deliberation, or recommendation.

### **III. Criteria for Excellence in Teaching**

The Department of Communication expects that excellent teachers will achieve student ratings that meet or exceed Department and college averages for the semesters under review; will demonstrate effective classroom teaching as evaluated by syllabi, assignments, and peer observations; will successfully mentor and advise graduate and undergraduate students; and will participate in curriculum development. These expectations are further explained below:

- A. Student Assessment of Instruction  
 Student assessment of instruction, via the University system of evaluation, is required. It is the responsibility of the tenure-earning faculty to make good faith effort to secure student responses of 65% or greater. Generally, this may be done in face-to-face classes by following recommended procedures (see appendix 3).

In addition to the University system of evaluation, tenure-earning faculty in Communication are required to administer the department student assessment (see appendix 1) in each face-to-face class, to be collected and recorded by department staff.

The Department of Communication expects that excellent teachers will achieve student ratings that meet or exceed Department and college averages for the semesters under review. Excellence in teaching is generally demonstrated by student ratings that consistently average 4.5 or above in most categories, where qualitative student feedback generally supports the ratings. Ratings below 4.5 can, in combination with other materials, be used to show excellence in teaching. Consistent ratings below 4.0 are generally not considered to show excellence in teaching for face-to-face classes. The faculty are mindful that many variables may influence student assessment averages, including required classes, difficult or controversial content, large lectures or on-line classes, etc.

The department values continued efforts to improve teaching. As such, ratings that document systematic effort and continued improvement in teaching can be used to supplement other evidence of effort and improvement to evaluate teaching effectiveness and excellence.

- B. Peer Observations  
 Peer observations of teaching are required for all tenure-earning faculty. The Department will require at least one peer observation and report during the three semesters prior to mid-tenure review, and at least one more during the three semesters prior to tenure review, both of which must be conducted by a tenured faculty member who is approved by the Chair to conduct the review.

Peer observations will be conducted and reported using a standard department form (see appendix 2) and submitted to the Chair within two weeks of the observation.

It is expected that peer observations will provide evidence of effective teaching. Any reservations expressed about teaching will be given considerable weight and evaluated carefully in relation to the candidate's overall teaching file.

Peer observations of teaching may be submitted for promotion to Professor, but are not required.

C. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Supervision, Mentoring, Advising

Candidates are expected to be actively engaged in mentoring graduate students. This can be evidenced by being a member of PhD, dissertation, thesis, and Masters committees. As well, candidates should begin to develop the ability to direct graduate student research (directing Masters, dissertation and thesis work). It is generally expected that tenureearning faculty will have been members of at least three graduate student committees by the time of tenure review. Supervision of graduate student teaching can also contribute to the evaluation of supervision, mentoring and advising.

Directing or participating on undergraduate honors thesis committees, and encouraging undergraduate research can contribute to the evaluation of supervision, mentoring and advising.

In addition to all of the above, faculty seeking promotion to Professor will have participated on at least five graduate student committees, and should have directed to graduation at least one PhD dissertation, and have directed, or be in the process of directing one or more additional PhD dissertation(s). Graduate student progress may also be considered. Directing Masters committees and thesis committees will be considered in evaluating supervision, mentoring and advising, but directing the work of PhD students is given more weight. Supervision of graduate student teaching can contribute to the evaluation of supervision, mentoring and advising. Mentoring post-doctoral scholars in the Department in the candidate's field of study may be considered in the evaluation of supervision, mentoring and advising.

D. Curriculum Development

Candidates are expected to actively participate in the renewal and maintenance of the curriculum. Such evidence can include the syllabi for experimental special topics courses, proposals for new courses, documented leadership in the certification or recertification of existing courses for college and university requirements, and participation in the periodic assessment and revision of department degree programs.

#### **IV. Criteria for Excellence in Research**

The Department of Communication expects that excellent researchers will make regular, consistent and significant contributions relevant to the field of Communication. Candidates are expected to publish scholarship and produce creative works that have been reviewed by peers and recognized authorities appropriate to the field of Communication and to the candidate's area(s) of expertise. These expectations are further explained below.

##### **A. Assessing Quality**

Quality of research is paramount for a rating of "Excellent" for earning tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or Professor. Candidates who meet quantitative criteria (defined below) but with lesser quality may not be recommended for tenure or promotion to Associate or Professor. Candidates with truly superlative quality might be advanced with lesser quantity. It should be recognized that quantitative measures of quality, such as acceptance ratios and citation counts, are imperfect in the humanities. In-field faculty as represented by readers' reports, external review letters, mid-tenure reviews, annual evaluations, and departmental reviews are in the best position to judge quality and to invoke established markers that facilitate evaluation of quality.

##### **B. Assessing Quantity**

During the tenure-earning years, candidates in Communication are expected to publish or have final acceptance of a high quality, refereed scholarly monograph plus approximately 2-4 high quality article-length refereed publications. For some researchers in Communication, journal publications are a more appropriate gauge of productivity—in these instances, candidates should have approximately 10 high quality refereed publications during the tenure-earning period.

Promotion to Professor requires evidence of a productive, continuing research program that has achieved national recognition in the discipline and for which there is evidence of impact on the discipline. Candidates for promotion to Professor are expected to meet and then exceed expectations for tenure.

##### **C. Publication Criteria**

In general, articles in academic journals are given preference over book chapters, but book chapters can be counted toward these totals and evaluated based upon the significance of the collection and its authors/editors/press. Articles or book chapters that have not been refereed, even invited articles for special journal issues, carry less weight than refereed articles. For collaborative work, the candidate's contribution should be accounted for. Overall, the body of work should represent a coherent and well-rounded program of research. Work published prior to the tenure-earning years can be considered evidence of such a program, but does not substitute for the record indicated above. Details of publication criteria are as follows:

1. Refereed works are preferable, especially refereed journal articles, then refereed book chapters. The refereed venue is one important indicator of the vetting of the quality of the research.
2. Top-tier journals in Communication are preferable, but a well-rounded record can include a variety of echelons of publications (from area specific journals, to practitioner journals, to regional/state journals, to the oldest journal in the field, to new online journals, for instance).
3. For monographs, refereed works are preferable, as are top tier university presses. However, consideration is given to the domain of scholarship, with attention to the fact that some areas of scholarship within the field of Communication fit best in specialized, and at times, non-traditional publication venues. The importance of the publication venue must be made clear within the record and ideally be addressed by outside reviewers.
4. While we place a high value on single-authored work, we also value co-authored work, particularly if it fits the domain of scholarship in which it occurs.
5. We value interdisciplinary collaboration, appropriate to the field of Communication. While we value consistent contributions to one sub-field, work that bridges across specialized audiences will be considered if it contributes to the success of the candidate's overall body of scholarship.
6. While not of equal value to refereed work, non-refereed work that has been solicited, especially when these solicitations are indications of the prominence of the candidate's reputation in the field, will be considered.
7. Online and digital production is increasingly a reality in the academy. We recognize the evolving nature of electronic publication and the changing nature of the media in which scholarship may be presented. Evidence of quality (not just popularity) will be a key factor in the assessment of this scholarship:
  - Online refereed journals are welcome parts of a record, but the weight and impact of this work must be made clear within the record and ideally be addressed by outside reviewers.
  - Databases, substantive scholarly blogs, and managed websites, while these works alone do not constitute "evidence of excellence" in scholarship, can be considered as part of a record of research. The weight and impact of the work must be made clear within the record and ideally be addressed by outside reviewers.
8. Creative works, including performance scholarship, may be appropriate publication products for Communication faculty. We prefer independent reviews of such works and that information about the context of the work be provided for the purposes of evaluation. The weight and impact of this work are best evaluated by outside reviewers in the relevant areas of creative production.
9. Non-refereed, non-solicited works can be part of a well-rounded research record, but these works alone do not constitute "evidence of excellence" in scholarship. For instance, encyclopedia entries and reviews, while evidence of productivity and visibility, are not normally included in the publication count (though might be if, for instance, they are lengthy entries or significant review essays).

## D. Definitions and Specifications

1. The average length of monographs in the humanities is 90-100K words. The average length of articles is 8-10K words. We recognize that different areas within the field, and highly ranked journals in the field, may have differing norms:
  - Items particularly shorter than average should be noted and the weight and impact of the work must be made clear within the record and ideally be addressed by outside reviewers.
  - Claims about length alone do not suffice if the overall record of publication is sparse. For instance, brief pieces, commentary pieces, and introductions to special journal issues are given less weight than peer-reviewed, full-length journal articles.
2. Publication of a work in two places with no, little, or some revision is both inevitable and acceptable (for instance, a journal article is published and later included in a book or collection). When the research record is sparse, however, careful scrutiny will be given to this practice.
3. Reprints of a previously published work, and works that appear in translation can be considered in evaluating research, but are not equal in value to an original publication.
4. Work “in press” counts, assuming that the candidate has a letter of final acceptance stating that all required revisions have been satisfactorily completed and the work is slated for publication. Work “in press,” however, does not substitute for a timely and continuous rhythm of publication and productivity across the tenure-earning years. The candidate’s record should represent a pattern indicative of a lifetime of continual accomplishment and productivity with potential for high impact on the discipline.
5. At the mid-tenure review, candidates should be prepared to present their book manuscripts along with their original dissertations if revising the dissertation for publication, all drafts and research notes, reviews, manuscripts for shorter works as yet unpublished, and any correspondence with editors, journals, and presses.

## E. Continuing Productivity

In addition to the necessary record of publication indicated above, productivity should be demonstrated on a continuing basis by such activities as presentation at and participation in conferences, workshops, and colloquia at various levels nationally and internationally; participation on editorial boards; external and internal funding for research; invited scholarly presentations; readings; requests to review articles, book manuscripts, and grant proposals; professional offices; publicly engaged scholarship (such as museum exhibits, films, public events, press commentary and interviews, and websites); and the receipt of national or international fellowships, residencies, awards, prizes, and other honors.

## F. External Reviews

External letters of evaluation must be solicited from well-established scholars in the field of Communication who are prominent in the candidate’s specific field of expertise and well positioned to speak to the candidate’s specific areas of expertise and

scholarship. All support and any reservations expressed will be given considerable weight and evaluated carefully in relation to the candidate's overall file.

### **V. Criteria for Evaluating Service**

The Department of Communication embraces the mission of service to public education, society and community. Candidates for tenure are expected to demonstrate active and consistent service work and show substantive contributions of service to the University, profession and/or public. The Department is aware that demands on faculty time can be exorbitant and counsel faculty to choose their service commitments wisely. It is recommended that tenure-track faculty consult with the department Chair before committing to service activities.

The Department recognizes that attendance at some department events, particularly those related to hires and to the overall and long-term functioning of the department, is service and an important part of being a productive department citizen. By the same token, a candidate's level of participation in the organization of, or attendance at, departmental *social* events, is not a factor in the evaluation of a candidate's excellence in service.

Candidates for tenure and promotion to Professor should demonstrate a record of substantial and consistent service work, particularly service that shows leadership in one or more of the following areas: the University, profession and/or public. Expectations about the level of meaningful service contributions for promotion to Professor are significantly higher than those for attaining the Associate rank, especially in the expectation that a candidate take on leadership roles in their service work.

**This document may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Faculty at any regular meeting of the department. After amendment, it must be approved by the Offices of the Dean and Provost.**

**Approved by faculty vote on May 12, 2020.**

**Approved by Dean's Office on May 14, 2020.**

**Approved by Provost on May 14, 2020.**